

Newton analysis essay sample



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Jeanette Winterson's *Newton* describes the isolation of her "stranger", Tom. In *Newton*, Winterson uses imagery to show Tom's differences in contrast to those of his neighbors. Tom's conflict lies between his neighbor and he due to the way he doesn't fit in. Winterson adds in Albert Camus' *L'Étranger* in which Camus' character, Meursault, finds himself a stranger in his own society.

Winterson begins her story with an almost nursery rhyme like poem; "This is the story of Tom.

This is the story of Tom and his neighbors.

This is the story of Tom and his neighbors in his neighbor's garden. This is the story of Tom."

The latter attracts attention to Tom being the main character and shows that his neighbor is also important to his story. She continues into the story by adding what Tom says and thinks; he states that his neighbors are like Classical Physicists and they follow sequential lives. They all rise at 7am, leave for work at 8am, and the women have coffee at 10am. Winterson then becomes very artistic with her work and Tom continues to explain the sequence, "If you see a body on the street in between 1pm and 2pm, it can only be the doctor, it can only be the undertaker, and it can only be the stranger. I am the stranger." This explains that Tom is the only one that stands out, or the "stranger". Winterson's use of "it can only be" enhances Tom's isolation amongst everyone in the town of Newton.

Tom considers his neighbors to be scientific with no room for flexibility, such as a work of art, which is what Tom could be considered as. The very first law of Thermodynamics is introduced with "You cannot transfer heat from a

colder to a hotter.” In this case, Tom’s neighbors are the colder, and he the hotter. It explains the distance and coldness of his neighbors and their incapacity of feeling Tom’s warmth.

Tom is very unlike his neighbors. His neighbor is against entropy, the evolution of uniformity, this is the second law of Thermodynamics. But due to the fact uniformity, or a constant, can never evolve in a society so concentrated on normality, it doesn’t exist. His neighbor has gone to such lengths by laminating her dead husband and placing him into her backyard. The lamination is done to preserve the body and prevent entropy from occurring. The same neighbor also has a plastic garden. She has done so to prevent entropy yet she says “ It’s so easy and so nice.” Tom, on the other hand, does not seem to mind change.

Tom experiences pressure from his neighbor to be less of a screwball because he is unmarried, wears corduroy trousers as opposed to the “ normal” denims and chinos. This pressure becomes so intense, his neighbor pays a visit to him, and in a state of shock, he places his copy of *L’Étranger* in the fridge. When his neighbor walks in, she does nothing but tell him that it isn’t normal to find books in fridges. She then explains the sequence inside her fridge. On the top shelf would be her chicken, followed by her bacon, her eggs, then her salad things and beer. She continues to discuss Tom’s lack of normality by discussing how he chooses to read the work of geniuses versus the normal reading list of sea stories. In a desperate attempt to change Tom to be like her, the neighbor invites him over for supper.

When Tom gets to the dinner table, everyone in Newton is seated there as well. The food served is chicken, stuffed with eggs wrapped in bacon. This also happens to be the same order of the neighbor's fridge. Though Tom's chicken is different from the others, like him. His is stuffed with a copy of *L'Étranger*, just like what the neighbor found in his fridge. From there on end, Tom is finally tormented to the extreme, and he leaves Newton with his pockets full of books by geniuses.

This story represents reality in society and how there will always be a person that can't seem to fit in with the rest of it. It shows how conformity is the most important factor for people that are unfamiliar with certain expectations or customs. If someone lacks the ability to conform, they are alienated. Winterson shows us exactly what is done in society today but with a touch of creativity and imagery.